Interview with Galen L. Stone

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

AMBASSADOR GALEN L. STONE

Interviewed by: Malcolm Thompson

Initial interview date: April 15, 1988

Q: This interview is being conducted with Ambassador Galen L. Stone on April 15, 1988 at his home in Dedham, Massachusetts. The interview is part of the oral history project of the Association for Diplomatic Studies. The interviewer is Malcolm Thompson, a retired Foreign Service Officer.

To start Galen, would you tell us when and how you got involved in foreign affairs and decided on a career in the Foreign Service?

STONE: Before attending Harvard, I attended a school in Milton, Massachusetts called Milton Academy and during my next to last year there, a retired U.S. Ambassador to Japan, who was a predecessor of Joseph C. Grew, visited the school and gave a talk to the two upper classes on the Foreign Service as a career. This man was extremely persuasive as far as I was concerned. I had never prior to that time considered the Foreign Service as a career, but he really turned me on, and from that point on I focused my efforts both at Milton Academy and at Harvard in preparing for a Foreign Service career.

As things developed, I left Harvard and enlisted in the Army serving four years during World War two and at the end of the war was a captain of Engineers serving as Military Governor of a Landkreis, or county in Germany. At that point the Army came to me and

offered me a job doing exactly what I had been doing, at what I then thought was a magnificent salary of seven thousand dollars a year. I seriously considered converting to civilian status and accepting that position. However, I finally returned to Harvard to get my degree which I had not received before entering the Army, and then took the Foreign Service exams and entered through that route. I presume that if I had remained as a civilian in military government, I would have ended up in the State Department and possibly followed a similar career to the one that I subsequently did follow.

Q: Good, and what was your first post after you entered the Foreign Service?

STONE: When I first entered the Foreign Service we were given an opportunity to put in our post preferences, and having recently returned from Germany, I thought it would be an easy transition into the Foreign Service to go back to familiar terrain. I applied for Munich, Germany and in their effort to be kind to Junior Officers, that is where I ended up. I was assigned as a Vice Consul, initially going through the various phases of consular work: passports, citizenship, consular invoices, and then in the second year that I was in the country I was asked to reestablish the Economic section of the Consulate General which had not been functioning since prior to World War two.

Q: And how long were you in Germany?

STONE: I was in Germany a total of three years, two years in the Consulate General in Munich, and then a year in Kiel, Germany where I was the Deputy United States Land Observer for Schleswig-Holstein, a small two-man office attached to the British zone and comparable arrangements in the other Western Allied occupation zones, and our function was to review legislation that was produced by the Landtag to make sure that it was consonant with Allied policy which was laid down by the Allied high Commission at the Petersberg.

Q: Were there any particular problems on relations with the Russians or other zones that you would care to comment on, or were things pretty much cut and dried under the occupation?

STONE: Well my relations with the Russians really took place more during my military career because I ended the war in Leipzig, Germany an area that we were ultimately to turnover to the Soviets. I was in the Assistant Chief of Staff G-5 section of Seventh Corps Headquarters in Leipzig and we had attached to other officers of twenty-six different nationalities whose job was to arrange for repatriation of slave laborers from their countries back to their homelands. My contact was with two Soviet officers and it was very extensive at that time. After my entry into the Foreign Service we really saw very little of the Soviets, except when my wife and I had our first three day weekend from Munich. We traveled to Prague, Czechoslovakia to visit a colleague, Ralph Saul, who had just been assigned to the Embassy there. We happened to spend the weekend in Prague in the same hotel with several Soviet Generals. It was the same weekend that the Communists took over. We got out of the country eleven hours before the border was closed!

Q: After Germany, were you reassigned to the Department in Washington? What was your next posting?

STONE: Yes, I was reassigned to the Department in Washington. I went to an intermediate course for foreign affairs; a mid-career course. I think it was the first course, and in fact I think I filled the last slot that they wanted to fill in the course. The requirement ostensibly was that of a person who had two full tours of duty abroad before being assigned to the course. I had barely had one and a half tours and following that three and a half month course, I was assigned to the Bureau of German Affairs, which was then a separate Bureau within the state Department and in the Office of German Economic Affairs. I spent three and a half years in that capacity, beginning the initial studies of a German contribution to the Western defense. I was in fact the note taker at the first official

meetings that we had with representatives of the German government about such a defense contribution.

A man named Theodore Blank who headed the newly established German Defense Office in the German Federal Republic came to Washington with six senior officers from all three military services. We sat down and began the very initial discussions for a German contribution to western defense, and I was later assigned in SHAPE headquarters in France at the time that the first German officers reported for duty in SHAPE headquarters.

Q: Are there any aspects on your assignment to SHAPE that you would care to comment on? Were there any particular problems that you saw or that you lived through?

STONE: Well SHAPE was fascinating assignment in that we worked very closely together in an international headquarters with officers from fourteen of the fifteen NATO nations. Iceland had no military representation there, but all the other countries had such representation. This was a difficult tightrope walking job in the sense that the great majority of my work was “U.S. eyes only,” but I set out to try and make my role in the headquarters as internationally acceptable as possible. I felt I achieved this when one of the international officers came to me one day telling me that they had a plan to place a nuclear explosive device in the Dardanelles, and he wanted me to tell him what the political consequences of such an operation might be. Needless to say, there were very many.

The period that I was in SHAPE, my involvement was essentially governed by the principals who I was there to serve; General Grunther in particular was a man who wanted to have everything in writing. He could be counted on to thoroughly read and absorb any briefing paper, and I rarely recall him questioning some statement that had been recommended to him. He was a man who was totally obsesses with the concept of time. Time to him was an all important factor, and if you were asked to be at a certain location by him, you had better be there on time or you would be in trouble.

General Norstad who was his successor was his successor was quite different. He preferred to have oral briefings, and very free and open discussions. The critical time for me during my time in SHAPE was the fall of 1956. This is when we had the combination of the Suez Crisis and the Hungarian revolution. At this time a very nervous group of Ambassadors from the NATO countries came out to SHAPE to be given a briefing and a reassurance by General Grunther on the military scene.

Q: Were there any other aspects of your SHAPE assignment that you would care to comment on? This preceded General de Gaulle's asking that SHAPE be moved out of France?

STONE: That's right, it did precede that. I arrived there at the time that Mendes—France had just scuttled the concept of a Western European army. My immediate superior at SHAPE when I arrived was G. Frederick Reinhardt, later to be Ambassador to Egypt and Italy.

The first time that he went off on leave, the first morning in fact when I came into the office, I received word that the Deputy Supreme Commander wanted to see me; it was Field Marshal Montgomery. I thought that there must be some mistake, as I felt I was far too Junior a figure for him to be concerned with, but they insisted that the Field Marshal wanted to see me. So I went in, expecting to be asked for the American idea of a successor to the concept of a western European army “and fully prepared to tell him that Washington had not yet had time to consider alternatives. I soon learned that he really didn't want to hear anything from me. He wanted to tell me what he thought should happen. In typical Monty fashion, he did not envisage a very large role for the United States in the future defense of Europe. I ended up by writing a long telegram reporting his ideas to the State Department.

Q: I notice from the Biographical Register that subsequent to this in the early sixties you were in New Delhi. Would you care to comment on that assignment, on that tour of duty?

STONE: Yes indeed. I was fortunate enough to be assigned to the British Imperial Defense College on the 1964 course. This was run on a calendar year basis and the student body was made up of forty British, ten from each military service and ten government civilians; twenty from the Commonwealth, there were two Indian officers and three Pakistanis, headed by a Lieutenant General, and four from the U.S.: one from each military service and I from the Foreign Service. It just so happened that one of the closest friends on the course that I made was an Indian Brigadier, and subsequently, on being assigned to India, this friendship proved invaluable, because it gave me an entr# into the Indian Army.

The Indian Army is the element in India that really holds the country together. The Indian military have had a remarkably apolitical record, serving the civilian government of the day; but not, as in Pakistan, assuming a direct responsibility for Government. My time there initially was involved with the Indian military. We had our own military mission to India at the time which had the strange acronym of USMSMI, the United States Military Supply Mission to India. In every other country, we had a MAAG, a Military Assistance Advisory Group, but the Indians made it very clear that they didn't want our advice. They thought that they knew what they wanted to do, so they insisted that the name of the organization be different.

Would you like me to talk about both phases of my assignment there? My first assignment there was as Counselor for Political Economic Affairs External. This was the result of Ambassador Chester Bowles' effort to try and apply in India a different embassy organizational structure in the belief that it was more appropriate to that country. I think in many respects he was right. The decisions, for example, on the location of a new steel mill, and in what site in India it would be placed, etcetera, had many political as well as economic considerations involved.

In my capacity in charge of the external side, I was involved with India's relations with the rest of the world - both economic and political. This made me the principal embassy

with working level contact with the Ministry of External Affairs; the Indian governments' equivalent of the State Department. This become of particular importance during the Indian war with Pakistan in 1965. At that time the Indian army attacked across the borders of Punjab toward Lahore, there were some six-hundred Americans there. I was dealing with the Indian government and trying to persuade them to hold their fire on Lahore airport, in order to permit our planes to land and evacuate American citizens. My principal contact in the Ministry of External Affairs, Suvendra Alirajpur, called me late one night. He said that he had done his best to get in touch with the Indian Chief of Staff, but he was very sorry to say that he had just not been able to do it and so there was nothing that could be done.I went back and drafted a telegram to inform everyone that we just simply couldn't do it. In the meantime, of course, we had pre-positioned air craft in Tehran to perform the evacuation. I had delivered my telegram to the code room, went back to my office, and the phone was ringing. Alirajpur told me he had just spoken to the Chief of Staff and they would hold their fire on Lahore airport for one hour the following morning. So, I rushed down, stopped the earlier telegram and got off another one, and American planes landed at ten minute intervals. We evacuated six hundred Americans from Lahore that following morning and the operation went off without a hitch.

Q: Refresh my memory, was this prior to the Indian War with China?

STONE: This was after the Indian war with China. The Indian war with China was in September of 1961. There were several Indo-Pakistan wars, the first one in 1965 was The Rann of Kutch. The war that I am speaking of now was in September of 1966. This was a period of further and increased difficulties between India and Pakistan over Kashmir which were made all the more poignant by the fact that we had substantially assisted in the military equipping of the Pakistani army. We were embarrassed to find an American tank captured from the Pakistanis on display at Connaught Circus in New Delhi. It took us awhile to get that removed, but it did not help our image in India one whit. In May 1968, I had been pulled out of India and sent to Saigon as Chief of the Political section. I thought at the time that this was a bit of madness on the part of the personnel authorities,

but the Counselor for Political Affairs was a man with whom I had worked with before in Germany, Arch Calhoun, and he asked for me particularly to be his number two in the Political section. I therefore was immersed in Vietnamese affairs with no prior experience in that area whatsoever.

I served there for eighteen months when a new political appointee was named to go as Ambassador to India, Senator Kenneth Keating, who had been defeated for reelection to the Senate by Robert Kennedy. They wanted to have in India an officer who had had recent India experience, so I was ordered, on return form a very brief leave in the United States to see my family to go back to Saigon by way of New Delhi to be to be vetted by the new Ambassador. Subsequently a month or so later I was transferred to New Delhi as the Deputy Chief of Mission. In 1971, relations between India and Pakistan further worsened and you had the second major Indo-Pakistan was with the focus on East Pakistan, or what later became the newly independent country of Bangladesh.

The American embassy played a very critical role during this period. As events unfolded, we were the only country that had excellent communications between New Delhi and Dacca and so the message calling for the surrender of the Pakistan army was in fact transmitted over our lines to the Consulate General in Dacca, and then delivered to General Niasi, the Senior Pakistani Commander in East Pakistan.

This was a very difficult period and during much of this time I was charg# d'affaires. I recall in particular addressing the Indian Defense College at a time when we were severely criticized for tilting toward Pakistan. It was a difficult job to defend American interest at that point. In fact, I understand that one of the questions that you were going to ask me later on was my greatest frustrations in my career. My greatest frustration occurred during this period. I was on the verge of resigning from the Foreign Service because I was so upset with the decision to send the Enterprise task force into the Bay of Bengal as an overt threat to the government of India.

Q: I had a question that I wanted to ask you about Ambassador Bowles. I happened to be in the Department in personnel during the period when Bowles was being prepared to go out to New Delhi; and I believe this was the second time in the early sixties when he had been Under Secretary in the Kennedy administration. The rumor around Washington was that he had fallen out with the President and the inner circle and so they said "Well let's send Chester back to New Delhi." He was quite happy to go there I presume. He caused quite a furor in personnel because he picked up several additional people that he wanted on his staff, for which there was no position. The Executive Director for the Middle East was very outraged at the fact that he had to find money to finance these people. I was put in the position of going up and trying to persuade the individual who was working on Bowles' staff that these people were not necessary, and being told that the Ambassador wanted them and that positions were to be found for them. I wonder how they worked out? One was a retired Army Colonel who was to be his political - military advisor, and that upset the Pentagon greatly because they had a whole staff of Generals and Colonels out there already.

STONE: They did decide that they wanted Chester Bowles out of the State Department; although I think he deserves great credit as the individual principally responsible for the appointment of Ambassadors in the early stages of the Kennedy administration. I mean people like Reischauer who went to Japan and Badeau who went to Egypt, people outside of the Foreign Service in many cases, but also people who the Foreign Service thoroughly respected for their professionalism and their knowledge of the area to which they were assigned. In addition working with the President, he finally got the Congressman from Brooklyn, John J. Rooney to agree to place some career officers in the major Embassies. It was during that period that Chip Bohlen was assigned to Paris, and Fred Reinhardt to Italy as Ambassador. Bowles was asked what job he would accept and he said the one job he would take would be to go back to India.

Now in terms of the people you are asking about, the Colonel that he took was named Grant Williams. He was a very fine military officer and very effective, he also had two staff aides that he brought in from outside the service. One was a man named Douglas Bennet whose father had been a close colleague of Bowles at Yale University, and had been his principal associate when Bowles was running the Office of Price Administration during the Second World War. Doug Bennet did extremely well, he was rather low-keyed, but he was an excellent staff aide and he later went on to be the Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Relations. The other one was a young man named Dick Celeste. Celeste is today the Governor of the State of Ohio.

Q: Very interesting, as you know it has always been a problem with Ambassadors who choose to take people outside of the normal Foreign Service staffing pattern and generally arrange to do so. This naturally causes some problems in the Department. Would you care to comment any further on your tour in Saigon? How were things looking then? Was there light at the end of the tunnel?

STONE: Well, when I arrived there, it was just after what was known as “mini-Tet.” The Tet Offensive had occurred in late February of 1968, the mini-tet came in May. I arrived just after that. I had only been there about ten days having had no prior involvement with that area at all.

In fact every other person who was assigned to the country was required to take as a minimum a three weeks orientation course before taking up their assignment. I was told that I didn't need to have that course, that they wanted me out there immediately and I could learn on the job. Well, within ten days of my arrival I was told I was in charge of the visit of the Secretary of Defense, the preparation of briefing papers and everything else, and it was very much a case of being thrown into the water and having to do your best to keep your head above it. Fortunately that visit came off well. One's existence in those days in Saigon with no families for distraction was pretty intense. We worked probably fourteen hours a day, seven days a week. There was just no break at all. The only break

that I took was during the lunch hour, when I would go to Circle Sportif, which had a magnificent Olympic-sized swimming pool, and swim laps and work out my frustrations in the water. I was responsible for twenty-four junior Foreign Service officers, eighteen of whom were trained in the Vietnamese language, and these young fellows were going out in the countryside in jeeps with pistols on their hips to talk to the local headman and provincial officials, to do our best to keep a finger on the pulse of what was happening in Vietnam. We ere really in competition with the wire services, because Washington did not want to be surprised by and story that came out of Vietnam. We just worked flat-out and filed a tremendous number of telegrams and reports to keep Washington fully abreast of the situation. There wasn't much light at the end of the tunnel, really.

Q: Was this during the period of Ambassador Lodge or Ellsworth Bunker?

STONE: Ellsworth Bunker was the Ambassador, and Sam Berger was the Deputy Ambassador. They had two Ambassadorial positions there at the time.

Q: This followed then the overthrow of Diem?

STONE: Oh yes! This was long after the overthrow of Diem. This was President Thieu's time, and to me the most satisfactory part of my assignment there was a result of trying to fix appointments with President Thieu and other top officials of the Vietnamese government. For this purpose, I was expected to deal with the Protocol Officer of the Palace. I soon found out that this man was totally ineffectual and I could never be sure which end was up.

By chance I met a distant relative of the President who worked in his inner office, and a fellow with whom I felt very much on the same wavelength. I arranged with the Signal Corps to have a direct telephone line installed between his office and mine, so we could do business over the telephone, which saved and immense amount of time. This man has

remained a close friend and at the present time is a senior officer in one of our largest corporations, living outside Chicago and making a great success as a businessman.

Q: Was General Westmoreland in charge, or was it still General Taylor?

STONE: No, Westmoreland had just left and General Clayton Abrams was the new commander. He would regularly attend the embassy country team meetings. I had the pleasure of accompanying him on Christmas day of 1968. We flew to Tay Ninh which was very close to the Cambodian border because we had an indication that the Viet Cong might release three American prisoners. We wanted to arrange this release without any political implications, so I was asked to accompany him. We flew to Tay Ninh and we stayed there on the ground until these three soldiers eventually were released and got back to our lines.

Q: With the changing Generals from say Westmoreland to Abrams, did you notice - or was there a marked difference in the relationships between the army and the embassy, or was it more or less smooth?

STONE: I wasn't there during the Westmoreland period so I can't speak to that situation. The relationships when I was there between the civilians and the military were excellent; very close working relationships between Ambassador Bunker and General Abrams. I chaired one of the committees which was involved in joint military - civilian operations. We had very close working relationships with the military, and by and large they went along very well.

Q: Very good, anything else that you would like to talk about in hindsight about your year in Vietnam? Was there anything that looking back on you wish that you had done differently, or wish that you would have seen the embassy handle differently?

STONE: I wish that I could have had a certain period of time to prepare for that assignment, I had none at all. I really felt like a bit of an ignoramus as far as that part of

the world was concerned. I had read and studied almost nothing about it during my earlier career of even in college, so that it was all relatively new. I found it a very fascinating and interesting part of the world and I can well understand why a number of our officers have made it their area of specialization.

I quite enjoyed the Vietnamese as people. They are a dynamic people, hard working. At that time, I had very close relations with the U.S. military. A field force commander used to come and pick me up with his helicopter on the roof of the embassy and I joined him in making his rounds of various divisional and other unit headquarters, getting briefings on what was going on and this was a very stimulating experience.

Q: It's been said that many of our top ranking officers in the policy making positions had, like yourself, very little experience in Southeast Asia and particularly in Vietnam. That may be one of the reasons that perhaps our policies did not work out; that you were not alone in your lack of basic training and understanding of the area. Do you think that is a fair comment?

STONE: Well, I think there is some truth to that, but after all, the policy is set not by the embassy but by Washington. The mistake in Vietnam was partly that we allowed ourselves to get out in front of the South Vietnamese. We were really taking over and fighting the South Vietnamese's war for them, rather than supporting them from behind to the extent I think we should have. It was certainly a great tragedy and the thing that upsets me the most when I look back on it is the criticism of the U.S. military. Today you have films like Platoon which in my mind depict the seamiest side of the U.S. military in Vietnam and are not a true reflection of the caliber of the army that we fielded at that time.

I personally believe from what I saw that we had an excellent and well run army that was functioning in the field. Of course we did not turn loose the ability that we had to fight the enemy and, as you may have heard, the other night, Mr. Nixon was saying that the thing

that he felt was the greatest mistake during his Presidency was not bombing Hanoi and Haiphong which he thought would have brought the war to a much more rapid end.

Q: Do you think it's fair to say that the objectives were ever clearly delineated so that the military was really put in an impossible position?

STONE: Yes I would. After that I went back to India and that was the period which was to me, the most frustrating of my Foreign Service career as I mentioned earlier. When the word came that we were sending the aircraft carrier Enterprise task force into the Bay of Bengal, I really felt that all I had been working for in terms of improving relationships between the United States and India was being totally jeopardized almost overnight. I seriously considered resigning from the Foreign Service at that point. I discussed the matter with Ambassador Keating. I recalled a colleague who had preceded me at the Imperial Defense College in London, David Ness, who resigned from the Foreign Service because of a policy difference relation to Egypt when he was the Charg# d'affaires there. I remember that the day after he resigned, there was a front page story in the New York Times, and after that Mr. Ness was never heard from again! I finally concluded that I could be more effective by remaining in the service and doing my best to do what I felt was right, rather than submitting my resignation.

Q: That raises an interesting question that I was going to ask you about later, but we might as well touch on it now. What can an officer do when he does disagree with the governments' policy? In this case, what actions were you able to take - if any - to express your dissatisfaction with the policy that you were supposed to carry out?

STONE: Well, I made my feelings very clear in my messages to Washington, but I was overruled. At that point, once the decision is made, if you are a good Foreign Service Officer you simply carry out your instructions as best you can. If it becomes a matter of such conscience for you that you simply can't do it, then you have no choice but to resign. I think that many career officers have been in that position. While you may not like it, you

have to do the very best you can to defend your government's interest as reflected by those in responsibility at the time.

Q: I thoroughly agree, but I think that today it must be very difficult for officers in controversial areas such as Central America and the Middle East to live with that problem?

STONE: My son was a member of a congressional staff group that was sent to El Salvador to observe the recent parliamentary elections. The main reaction he returned with was astonishment at the extent to which events in El Salvador are being run out of the U.S. Embassy. So sometimes, as we all know happened during the period that I was in Southeast Asia, our embassies do play a remarkably involved role in the events of other countries.

Q: Galen, according to my notes in 1973 you were reassigned to Paris?

STONE: That's right. I had served on my second tour in India for almost four years, initially with Kenneth Keating, and then with Daniel Patrick Moynihan. During the interim between the departure of Keating and the arrival of Moynihan, I was Charg# d'affaires for almost six months. I was brought back to the Department to meet privately with Ambassador Moynihan and brief him and his family about India. I remained in India for some two months with him, trying to help him into the saddle so to speak.

At that point I learned that Ambassador John Irwin, who had been the Deputy Secretary of the Department, wished me to be assigned as his Deputy in Paris. I served with him throughout his tour there and subsequently served with his successor, Kenneth Rush. So in all I had four different political Ambassadors to whom I was the Deputy. I must say in retrospect that the job of DCM in a major American embassy with a political appointee Ambassador is I think the most challenging and demanding position in the Foreign Service. I was very fortunate in working for Ambassador Irwin, who was a thorough gentleman. He is one of the few men that I would describe as being a gentleman almost to a fault. I say that because in the hurley-burley of the Washington bureaucracy he was a

man who was always courteous enough to allow the other person to speak first. The result was that he didn't have sufficient opportunity to voice his own thoughts.

He was extremely perceptive and extremely able; but because of his politeness his talents were not fully appreciated. This was true of the French as well, and was compounded by the fact that his knowledge of the French language was quite limited. It wasn't until the end of his tour that the French realized what an effective and outstanding Ambassador he was. Unfortunately, his tour was all too short, he was there only eighteen months, and during that period he was away from the post for eight of them.

That was the period during which negotiations were going on in Paris with the Vietnamese. Our then Secretary of State Mr. Kissinger thrived on having various separate lines of communication with foreign officials.

I found myself at times carrying personal messages to the French Foreign Minister Jobert very late at night. My tour in Paris was without doubt the most difficult and challenging that I had in my Foreign Service career. The demands on the time of the top people in the embassy in France extensive. There were so many functions that it was really difficult to avoid because one felt the United States had to be represented. This took so much of one's time, combined with the fact that there were twenty-six different U.S. government agencies represented in the Embassy , and as DCM I had to try and keep all of them going in the same direction. It was a real challenge.

Q: How long were you in Paris during this tour?

STONE: I was there for twenty-five months which may not sound like a long time, but I can tell you that none of my three predecessors lasted more than fifteen months. They were Jack Kubisch, Perry Culley, and I think Woody Wallner was the other one.

Q: Then I believe from the Biographical Register that you were to be Chief of Mission in Laos? Was this to be a direct transfer from Paris?

STONE: That's correct. It would have been my first Chief of Mission assignment so I had to be confirmed by the Senate. There were various and sundry delays along the way because the request for agr#ment got lost somewhere between Vientiane and Luang Prabang where the King of Laos resided. We waited around for months, wondering when the agr#ment was going to come through. During all of this period of course, we couldn't say anything about it because we hadn't received the approval of the Laotian government to my appointment. By the time, it finally did come through, events had moved very rapidly in Indochina. We had evacuated our mission in Cambodia and soon thereafter withdrew from Vietnam. By the time that I had been confirmed by the Senate and my appointment had been attested by the President the question arose as to whether we would even have an Ambassador in Laos.

When I was fist approached about going there, which was in February of 1975, we had four hundred official Americans on the staff in the Embassy in Laos. I was really delighted with the assignment because I thought this was just what I was ready for and should be doing at that stage of my career. By the time I had been confirmed by the Senate and was ready to go to the post, we had drawn the staffing down to forty Americans and were contemplating reducing it even further because the country was on the verge of being taken over entirely by the Communists. It really evolved into being a listening post and eventually it was decided that we wouldn't have an Ambassador there, but rather would have a Charg# d'affaires in charge of the mission. And so, I was to take leave and I would hear shortly from personnel about my next assignment.

Well the word “shortly” finally stretched almost into three months, which was the longest break that I ever had during my entire Foreign Service career. I then reported to Washington to serve as chairman of one of the selection boards, and immediately after arriving in Washington was invited to lunch at the Cosmos Club by Ambassador Gerald Tape. Ambassador Tape had been the principal U.S. delegate to the International Atomic Energy Agency and he had called on me at one point when I was Charg# d'affaires in

Paris. He had been given a list of three names to be the resident Chief of the U.S. Mission to the International Atomic Energy Agency. I think that my name was the only one which looked familiar to him. The result was that eventually I was assigned to Vienna as the U.S. Resident Representative to the international Atomic Energy with the personal rank of Ambassador.

Q: And how long did that last?

STONE: That lasted just exactly two years, from February of 1976 to February of 1978. It was an interesting assignment and at that point career officers were being encouraged to get involved in multi-lateral diplomacy. I must say that I found multi-lateral diplomacy to be a fairly frustrating experience. This was particularly true in an organization which had a Board of Governors of some thirty-three countries, the majority of whom were from the Third World. The thing that made that assignment most interesting was that of all the organizations in the world, this was the one where our interests most closely paralleled those of the Soviet Union. Neither the Soviet Union or the Unite States wanted to see other countries get their hands on nuclear weapons. So both the Soviets and ourselves were doing as much as we could to beef-up the inspection side of the International Atomic Energy Agency, which sends inspectors out to visit nuclear plants all over the world. Of course the inspections are subject to the willingness of the particular host country to place their plants under such inspection.

We had a practice of sitting down with the Soviets before each major meeting of the Governing Body and at least not pulling any surprises on each other. The Soviets would at times tell us that they were going to have to say nasty things about us in regard to certain political positions, but by and large our relations were reasonably cooperative and complementary.

Q: When did you become Ambassador to Cyprus in Nicosia? Was that you next assignment?

STONE: Yes, that was my next and last assignment. I recall being asked to come to London. This was during the Carter Administration in late 1977. The new czar on non-proliferation was Gerald Smith. I go knowing that I should come to London and meet him at the American Embassy there. Kingman Brewster was the Ambassador in London at the time, and very kindly invited be to stay at his residence. I walked around Regents Park at least twenty times with Gerald Smith while he tried to persuade me that I should remain on in Vienna. He did tell me that I was under consideration for another ambassadorial post, but I had no idea whatsoever what that post might be. I really felt that by that time that there really wasn't too much more that I could do at the International Atomic Energy Agency. The dealings with such a host of other countries made progress terribly difficult and frustrating and the upshot was that I eventually was appointed as Ambassador to Cyprus.

We arrived in Cyprus in late March of 1978 almost on the day that President Carter announced the lifting of the arms embargo against Turkey. This announcement was greeted with a series of protest rallies and demonstrations against the U.S. Embassy. The Greek Cypriots and the Greeks did not wish the United States to resume arms deliveries to Turkey, and at one point armored cars from the Cyprus National Guard were deployed around the Embassy building for our protection. It so happened that in Cyprus the Chancery building and the Ambassador's residence were one and the same and we live on the third and fourth floors and the Chancery was on the first and second floors. It was like being the skipper of a ship, we entertained on the top decks and then went down to the boiler room to do the work. I was somewhat concerned on arrival that President Kyprianou might delay receiving my letters on credence, but he didn't. I did have to stand and listen to some-what of a tongue lashing, which I didn't appreciate at all. However, having begun my tour when our relations were at an absolute nadir, I had the satisfaction of feeling the we had almost nowhere to go but up. My assignment in Cyprus was certainly a fascinating one, because even though our government and all the other governments of the world, with the exception of Turkey, recognized the Greek Cypriot administration as

the government of the Republic of Cyprus, I was expected to deal with the Turkish Cypriot, “so-called government” as well. I did this by dealing on a personal basis with the head of that government, Mr. Rauf Denktash who called himself “President of the Turkish State of North Cyprus.” His government was recognized only by the government of Turkey. What one said on one side of the so-called “green line,” which divided Greek and Turkish Cyprus had a one hundred and eighty degree different effect than it did on the other. So it was very important to watch every word I uttered that might be reflected in any kind of public media, because of course the Turks were reading the Greek language papers and vice versa. The Ambassadors on the islands were being watched like hawks by both sides to try and determine where their sympathies really lay. Having started at a very low ebb, I found the assignment there extremely satisfying. This was partly because I was in the relatively unique position of having a very clear idea of what my government wanted in Cyprus. What we least wanted was to have a further flare-up between the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots, or between Greece and Turkey both of whom are our allies within NATO.

I was able to take steps on my own, which in other times and places would have required be to go back to Washington and ask for instructions before doing what I wanted. For example, the Greek Cypriot National Guard, which was totally officered by career Greek army officers from Greece, got the bee in their bonnet to harden all the out posts facing the Turkish forces. They started pouring concrete and reinforcing all of their military outposts which was very offensive to the Turkish army which was deployed where they could see what was going on. In order to keep things on an even keel, (and I must say that I worked quite closely with the U.N. in this regard,) I passed the word to the Minister of Justice, with the understanding that the word would be further passed onto the President, that if any further hostilities broke out as a result of this Greek Cypriot action, I would have to report to Washington that it had been brought on by the Greek Cypriots themselves. Within twenty four hours the efforts at hardening their outposts ceased!

Q: At this time the Turks had already invaded the northern part of Cyprus and occupied a considerable amount up to the so-called green line?

STONE: That's right. That particular event had taken place in the summer of 1974 and that was when my predecessor once removed, Rodger Davies had been assassinated by a bullet fired by a Greek Cypriot right into the embassy premises and down a corridor to where he was standing. This made life for the Ambassador in Cyprus somewhat different from what it had habitually been, in that I lived with a seven man personal body guard every where I went. Of course that unfortunately has become all too common now-a-days, with the amount of terrorism that we are experiencing.

Q: Were you able to travel for example, to the coastal area facing Turkey? As you know I spent many years in Turkey and was a Turkish language officer. I also visited Cyprus during the time in the early sixties when Toby Belcher was Consul General and he had a lovely house at Kyrenia, I believe, overlooking the water. I wondered whether that part of the island was available to you at all?

STONE: Yes it was. Because of the fact that I was expected to deal with the Turkish Cypriots as well as with the Greek Cypriots, I had to have a way of doing that. The government did rent a house, and I think that it was the same house that Toby had lived in, and they were able to continue renting it because it had been Turkish owned. We could not have used a house that was owned by a Greek Cypriot and occupied by the Turks. This house was put at my disposal and this house become my weekend escape. We would regularly go up there because we could wave good bye to our Greek Cypriot body guards at the green line, go through the U.N. lines and then proceed on our own and do our own thing so to speak in the north.

We got a lot of business done with Turkish Cypriots at relatively small social affairs. I used to climb Mount Kornos with the so-called Foreign Minister Kenan Atakol, who is today called the Foreign Minister of the Turkish State of North Cyprus. Both he and his wife were

graduates of Penn State University and extremely personable people, and we had a very easy business and social relationship with them.

Q: I am very familiar with the Turkish position and if you were to discuss this with the Turks, they would go back to the London Agreements of 1960 which gave independence to Cyprus and which very clearly delineated the authority that the Turks would have, which amounted to a veto authority. The Turks would tell you that Makarios violated this agreement in many respects. Makarios would have probably answered that the agreement was impossible and that you couldn't have a government where a minority had a right of veto. Legalistically, the Turks would always hang to that agreement as a justification for their later actions. How would you comment on that agreement?

STONE: Well I think that the Turks have a good legal case. They are a guarantor power of the original 1960 agreements, and it was on that basis that they moved into Cyprus in the early summer off 1974. At the time as you recall the Colonels were ruling Greece and they got the bee in their bonnet to get rid of Makarios, because by that time Makarios had become convinced that Cyprus' future lay in being an independent entity and not as a part of Greece. Makarios had initially been a supporter of Enosis but he later came to feel that Cyprus should not be a part of Greece, that it should be an independent entity. The Colonels plotted to get rid of him and of course you know that Makarios had to flee for his life and they installed a man named Nicos Sampson as a puppet. The Turks, after consulting with the British, and learning that the British were not going to intervene, then decided to move on their own.

I think that it's hard to fault the Turks for that action. Where they perhaps can be faulted, is in the steps that they later took. Of course as a result of the initial Turkish invasion which resulted in, let's say some twenty percent of the North of the island being occupied by regular forces from Turkey; the UN immediately called for a cease-fire and negotiations began in Lausanne. Well, those negotiations had been going for about three weeks or so when the Turks suddenly without warning moved out and took over considerably more

terrain, so that today they in fact control roughly thirty six percent of the surface of the island. Four percent of the island is now under UN control with a UN military force that has been there since 1964 and, I must say doing a very commendable job of keeping the peace between the two protagonists.

Q: The Turkish rebuttal; and I am being sort of the Devil's advocate here, would be that as far as partition goes the island being eighty percent more or less Greek Cypriot to twenty percent Turkish Cypriot - the Greeks of course would say if they were to agree to any kind of a partition, that the Turks should have twenty percent of the land area. The Turks on the other hand say that it should be according to land ownership. Since most of the Turkish population are peasants and have land and fields, whereas the Greeks are congregated in the cities like Nicosia and the villages. On the land ownership issue, it comes out much nearer one-third Turkish and two-thirds Greek! So that's another Gordian knot where it all depends on how you look at it.

STONE: Well, of course, before these events of 1974, the Turkish Cypriots and the Greek Cypriots were scattered all over the island and they were living cheek by jowl. After the 1963 events when Makarios over-ruled the Turks and the Turkish representatives withdrew from the Parliament, the Turks were more or less forced into enclaves in their own particular areas because the Greek Cypriots who controlled the surrounding area required permits for them to move from one place to another. So they were really economically deprived in many ways, and were in many cases given jobs as laborers, where as the Greek Cypriots, who tend to be natural entrepreneurs anyway, had obtained more of the higher paying jobs.

After this, as you recall in 1975 there was an agreement reached for an exchange of population. At that point all of the Turks within the Greek Cypriot area were moved to the North and vice versa. In fact, whole villages, whole Turkish villages were moved into what had been Greek villages in the North, and they kept the entire population together so as to give them some sense of stability when they moved with their friends and associates

and people that they knew. By and large this worked rather effectively in terms of the town administration, because the history in Cyprus, as you probably know, is one of a tremendous importance being attached to the town from which one comes.

Cyprus in the pre World War Two era was considered to be one of the most crime-free areas on the face of the earth. This was because an individual who committed a crime not only dishonored himself and his family, but he dishonored his village as well. The attitude of hospitality amongst the Cypriots was also something we found very remarkable. The common greeting is “kopieste,” which means “come and share my meal,” and this was literally what they meant, and still do today in some of the outlying villages. Of course this has now disappeared almost entirely in the cities and the populated areas.

Q: I note from the newspapers recently that the Turks and Greeks are talking about this, Ankara and Athens, and relations seem to be a bit better. Do you see this sort of a partition as being permanent as you look ahead?

STONE: No, I don't see it as being a permanent partition in the sense of two separate and independent political entities, because I just think that there are too many mini-states in this world. The groundwork has been pretty well plowed, in fact it's been gone over time and time again, to reestablish Cyprus as a federated state. I think there will be two parts to the federation, there will be a Turkish part and there will be a Greek part. There will be a considerable amount of autonomy left to each part. Each part will have it's own police force and it's own educational system. In the north it will be predominantly Muslim, the south Greek Orthodox.

I think that there can be a loose federation which would have at the center, common currency, common foreign policy, some shared defense arrangement which could run the island. This area has been gone over and over, under the auspices of the United Nations Special Representative who has served on Cyprus ever since 1964 -a civilian representative of the United Nations Secretary General. The present United Nations

Secretary General, Javier Perez de Cuellar served on Cyprus himself for two and a half to three years and thought when he became the Secretary General that this would be a relatively easy problem for him to resolve. He brought Mr. Kyprianou and Mr. Denktash to New York and thought that he was going to have them sign an agreement which would resolve this issue, or at least be a step in that direction, but Mr. Kyprianou refused to sign it.

I have never seen the document which he asked them to sign, but I am under the impression that the UN had tried to be even-handed. I must say my Greek Cypriot friends, whose judgement I respect, do feel that the Secretary General did present a document that tended to be more favorable to the Turkish Cypriot cause and they rather supported the fact that Mr. Kyprianou did not sign it. I felt all along that as long as Mr. Kyprianou and Mr. Denktash were the principle in charge of their respective communities, that there would not be a solution, because both of these men have personally lived through all of the tragedy that has gone on, and know of all the evil deeds which one side has done to the other. So there is a tremendous tendency on their part to look backward rather than to look forward.

With the recent election of a new President in the Greek part of Cyprus, George Vassiliou who is very intelligent and has a very agile mind, I believe that the chances of some agreement are considerably enhanced. You have to realize that he has to bring along his Greek Cypriot population in whatever he does. Therefore, I am not surprised that the initial reports make it sound as though there is hardly any change whatsoever in the Greek Cypriot position.

Q: I would agree, and also I would say that if the influence of Ankara and Athens can be minimized, it would all be in the interest of a permanent settlement. In other words, if the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots can be more or less left alone to settle their own problems, then I think they are more likely to work out a solution. This is because I feel that

Ankara and Athens have never played a very constructive role on either side. What do you think?

STONE: They haven't up until now, but I think it is encouraging that Mr. Ozal and Mr. Papandreou seem to be making some progress in terms of their own problems between Greece and Turkey directly. I believe that to bring about a solution in Cyprus there has got to be a willingness on their part to support whatever can be done, and perhaps to nudge their respective sides into an agreement. I wouldn't rule out that it may be important to involve them in supporting a solution to the problem.

Q: Well of course they have to agree. Would you have any comments on U.S. policy towards Cyprus? Do you think there is anything else that we should have done, could have done, or should not have done?

STONE: I don't really have any comments on policy during the time that I was there. One could argue a lot about U.S. policy during the period that Turkey invaded North Cyprus in 1974. In all fairness, we have to remember what was happening in the U.S. at that time, as that was the very summer that we were going through Watergate, which was preoccupying the attention of the senior officials of the U.S. government. The U.S. had been instrumental on two previous occasions in dissuading the Turks from invading Cyprus. Once Cyrus Vance was directly involved in that and there could well have been a Turkish invasion of Cyprus, - but were successful in dissuading Turkey from moving. Because of our success that time, we were blamed by the Greek Cypriots for not having prevented Turkey from invading in 1974. We were accused by the Greek Cypriots of being more or less responsible for the Turkish invasion of Cyprus. However, in reality they should have looked toward their motherland, (if you want to call it that), Greece, as being the cause of the problem. Naturally they didn't want to place the blame on Greece as they found it far easier to place the blame on the United States. This is so often the case in foreign countries.

The thing that has always struck me in my service around the world is how much people look at the world through their own particular perspective and see their own country as being the cockpit of world politics. This was just as true of the Cypriots as it was of the Indians. The Cypriots felt that the most important problem that the world faced, was the Cyprus problem!

Q: Well, unless you have any further comments on your various assignments I would like to turn to some more general questions about the Foreign Service if that's all right with you. One of the questions I want to ask you is whether you would recommend a Foreign Service career to a son or daughter of yours, and if so, why; and if not, why not?

STONE: I find that a very difficult question. I personally feel very fortunate to have served in the Foreign Service and I consider myself very lucky indeed to have had the career that I did. I pretty much had the feeling all along that I made a logical progression as I moved in the service. The character of the service today of course is vastly different from when I entered, or from when you entered. I was one of 1,200 Foreign Service officers when I joined and that was a fairly tight group whom you got to know more or less, and it was a group of people with whom I felt very proud to be associated.

Later on in the mid fifties we had the Wristonization Program which blanketed into the Foreign Service a number of Civil Service employees in the State Department and turned them overnight into Foreign Service Officers who needed to have foreign experience and so were pushed out into the field. This meant that the State Department was largely staffed with people who had to be brought back from jobs abroad to fill positions in the State Department hierarchy. I think that in retrospect, while this was a difficult adjustment and did create a somewhat less elitist corps, it resulted in a number of people ending up in positions in the Foreign Service which they never sought in the first place.

Now this was further complicated by a policy decision to have embassies abroad handle the administration for all other U.S. government agencies, so that the administrative

positions were all located in the State Department as opposed to being staffed by other agencies serving abroad. This led to a substantial number of people in administration becoming Foreign Service Officers as opposed to people who had really tried to be trained, or were selected on the basis of expertise in political or economic or other channels, which would potentially qualify them for policy making positions. Furthermore the service today has had to deal with the problem of terrorism, and of course what one does to protect one's self against terrorism is exactly counter to the purpose of the Foreign Service.

Q: Galen you were in the midst of commenting on the Foreign Service today and the differences from when we entered it. Do you wish to continue?

STONE: Yes, and I haven't yet answered your question about whether I would encourage a son or daughter to enter the service, I realize that.

I guess we were talking about the Wristonization program and integration and how it changed the character of the service, that's right. Then I was talking about the effect of terrorism and how it made it much more difficult in a sense for us to deal, I think of it as an inhibiting factor as it were in being able to develop close relations with foreigners in foreign communities - it certainly doesn't help.

The other aspect that I think has changed is that formerly it was fairly well recognized that our foreign affairs and our foreign policy was mainly in the hands of the Department of State. That has changed a lot in recent years. You now have everybody in Washington who has any potential involvement with foreign affairs wanting to have a piece of the turf, and it has made it much more difficult for the State Department to really control what is going on. Whether it is the Defense Department, the Central Intelligence Agency, you name it, everybody wants to have their hand in dealing with foreign countries. This is particularly the case as far as Capitol Hill is concerned. We have had much more involvement by Congressmen and Senators who inject themselves in some instances into

roles that frankly, I think they have no business being in what so ever. We recently saw that in the Philippines were Mrs. Aquino came to power and the involvement of some of our Congressmen in directly dealing with the Filipinos completely undercut the role of the Foreign Service.

So to answer your question, I do have a son who is very interested in foreign affairs and he is presently working on Capitol Hill. He may be one of those people who jumps in and out of foreign policy roles as administrations change and I don't fault him for deciding that that's the best way to proceed rather than entering the Foreign Service as a career person.

Q: It's been said that one of the biggest problems that the Foreign Service has is that it has no constituency. The Pentagon has a well established lobby and so forth. I have read recently in AFSA journals that they are proposing to open an office on Capitol Hill and to have somebody permanently assigned there from the Department of State and the Foreign Service to represent their interests with Congress. Do you think this would help?

STONE: I think that it would help somewhat. It will depend largely on how effective the individual is who does it. It could be very effective, or it could be of questionable assistance. It is a difficult problem, and the way our constitution is written, if you don't have somebody who is fairly forceful as the Secretary of State, you have to expect that you're going to be encroached up on by powerful figures from Capitol Hill - that the Legislative Branch will inject itself more and more into what was intended to be the prerogative of the Executive Branch. These things are going to fluctuate back and forth, depending on personalities and how persuasive people are, and so on and so forth.

Q: As you know it's a sad fact that if you take the graduating class of a school like the Fletcher School, twenty or thirty years ago over half of those students would go into government service and most of them into the Department of State. Nowadays it is a very small percentage that opt for a career in the Foreign Service. Do you see any way of turning this around or is it and inevitable development?

STONE: Well, I think that it's partly the pressures in our society on people who are ambitious and want to get ahead and there is an economic element that is tied into this. The fact that to enter the Foreign Service requires the rather elaborate and prolonged procedures that is does, and with the relative impatience of the younger generation today, it just becomes very, very difficult to find the best people who are prepared to sit around and wait for up to eighteen months before they are ever offered an appointment. If you combine that with the fact that we are squeezing our national budget in order to economize and reduce our huge deficits, it makes it a very chancy proposition for someone to gain admission to the Foreign Service.

The number of people that take the Foreign Service entrance exam I think has been running around twenty to twenty-five thousand per year and the number of people who are ultimately being taken into the service is one hundred or at best two hundred. So the winnowing process is just tremendous. Well that's not bad in and of itself, but the fact that so many people are informed that they are not accepted, or even if they pass the exam are put on a waiting list for appointment, depending on whether there are sufficient funds to hire them, makes the whole prospect of getting the best people almost impossible.

This is because nobody is going to sit around and wait for that long to get their career started. I find it a difficult situation, partly because of the FBI checks. You take one of our children who has lived everyplace that we have lived in a foreign country and try and find out what they can about the background habits or what have you of the potential candidate. That is a terribly time consuming and terribly costly thing. I know that the State Department pays something like twenty five thousand dollars just to get a person on the rolls through all through all their: the medical exams, the background investigations and so on. You just can't expect people to sit still for that length of time.

Q: It's also been said that the communications revolution, the fact that we now have almost instant knowledge of what's going on be it the hijacked plane at the airport in Algiers, plus we have trained correspondents both TV and print media, has made in a sense the

reporting function of the Foreign Service more or less irrelevant. I don't believe this myself, but it is widely believed. Why do we need political officers sending in reports when we have The New York Times and people ho have been there for years and are equally well trained, perhaps more so?

STONE: Well I think that in many cases our missions abroad today are over staffed. I don't think we need the size of missions that we have in some countries. I do feel that it is essential that we maintain representation in foreign capitals because only by living in a capital can you really find who pulls the strings in making decisions in a foreign government. Without intimate familiarization with the workings of a foreign government, our government simply cannot be as effective as we would like to be or sometimes need to be in order to discharge the interest of the U.S.

Q: Very true. Well, do you have any further comments that you would like to make before we close this interview, anything that you care to discuss?

STONE: Well there are lots of things that have happened in some thirty four years in the Foreign Service that I could go on about, but I think that we have touched the high points.

Q: All right Galen, thank you very much. This closes the interview with Ambassador Galen Stone. This interview along with others will be part of Senior Officer Oral History Project of the Association for Diplomatic Studies.

End of interview